

Oklahoma Conservation Partnership Report

Fall Issue 2015

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VISION: Productive Lands Healthy Environment -- MISSION: Helping People Help the Land

Be Part of the Solution - Become an Earth Team Volunteer

The Earth Team is NRCS' volunteer workforce that is making a difference in every county in the nation. Earth Team volunteers work side-by-side with conservation professionals and are an integral part of the conservation partnership. There are many



ways in which you can give your time and knowledge to help care for our nation's soil, water and related natural resources. Oklahoma has offices in every county in the state that have opportunities for volunteers. Opportunities are available in many areas including conservation education, public information, clerical duties and inputting data into computers.

REQUIREMENTS: Earth Team volunteers must be at least 14 years of age. There is no maximum age limit. Volunteers work outdoors or indoors; part-time or full time.

BENEFITS: Earth Team volunteers get recognized for their work hours and have legal and insurance protection for any work-related injuries. There's no pay, but they get the satisfaction and enjoyment of enhancing our Nation's ecosystems.

GET STARTED: Contact an Earth Team Program Manager

Kirk Schreiner - Oklahoma State & Zone 3 Earth Team Program Manager - kirk.schreiner@ok.usda.gov, 580-353-1564 ext 116

Rusty Peterson - Zone 1 Earth Team Program Manager - russell.peterson@ok.usda.gov, 580-336-5597 ext 105

Andy Inman - Zone 2 Earth Team Program Manager - andrew.inman@ok.usda.gov, 918-696-7612

Derek Kelso - Zone 4 Earth Team Program Manager - derek.kelso@ok.usda.gov, 580-326-7516 ext 108

For more information on Earth Team - [Visit the National Earth Team Website](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/earthteam)



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Oklahoma Programs Round Up



2015 was a busy year for Financial Assistance Programs in Oklahoma. Field Offices throughout the State accepted, processed and evaluated over 9,500 applications for financial assistance in a variety of conservation programs. In the end over 2,000 contracts were developed with agricultural producers to improve conservation on over 1.7 million acres. In addition, the programs will provide over \$33 million of financial assistance to Oklahoma producers.

Conservation Stewardship Program

Field Offices throughout the State received, processed and ranked 2,393 applications for the Conservation Stewardship Program in Oklahoma.

1,252 contracts were developed to obligate over \$16.4 million dollars on over 1.4 million acres. Applications are received and processed under the following Account Type:

Beginning Farmer - Ag Lands	100 Contracts Obligated	\$663,006 Obligations	46,391 Acres Obligated
General - Ag Lands	965 Contracts Obligated	\$14,247,612 Obligations	1,278,951 Acres Obligated
Socially Disadvantaged - Ag Lands	163 Contracts Obligated	\$1,408,115 Obligations	103,615 Acres Obligated
Beginning Farmer - NIPF	2 Contracts Obligated	\$2,000 Obligations	489 Acres Obligated
General - NIPF	17 Contracts Obligated	\$76,784 Obligations	13,017 Acres Obligated
Socially Disadvantaged - NIPF	5 Contracts Obligated	\$8,789 Obligations	1,655 Acres Obligated

Environmental Quality Incentives Program


Field Offices accepted, processed and ranked over 7,000 applications for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in Oklahoma for fiscal year 2015.

Contracts were developed with 948 agricultural producers throughout the State to implement conservation practices on nearly 300,000 acres. Total obligations for EQIP were just over \$17.5 million.

In addition, Oklahoma participated in the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) with 71 applications received and 20 contracts developed. \$725,149 is obligated to NWQI with 8,758 acres.

Oklahoma had a variety of Statewide Initiatives designed to meet the needs of Oklahoma Producers. Some of these Statewide Initiatives included:

Lesser Prairie Chicken	7 Contracts Obligated	\$670,612 Obligations	16, 2014 Acres Impacted
Oklahoma StrikeForce	52 Contracts Obligated	\$802,803 Obligations	13, 623 Acres Impacted
Air Quality Priority	18 Contracts Obligated	\$650,975 Obligations	2,887 Acres Impacted
Illinois River (Eucha/Spavinaw)	4 Contracts Obligated	\$365,580 Obligations	377 Acres Impacted



Hats off to you, Field Service Centers! Thanks for a great 2015!

Oklahoma Priorities:

- ♦ **Deliver Farm Bill Programs**
- ♦ **Initiatives**
- ♦ **Soil Health**
- ♦ **Provide TA for Non Cost-Share Conservation Planning & Implementation**
- ♦ **Watershed Rehab Program**
- ♦ **Increase Cooperative Conservation**
- ♦ **Emergency Watershed Program**





Mobile Connections



Oklahoma Natural Resources Conservation Service -

Online Access to Conservation for Farmers and Ranchers

Conservation Client Gateway is an NRCS website that provides secure access to conservation plans, practice implementation schedules, financial applications and contracts, documents and payment information.

Instead of driving to your field office multiple times, Conservation Client Gateway enables you to request assistance, sign documents and interact with NRCS field staff online. NRCS staff will still be available in field offices to work with you face-to-face, this online tool just provides another option. Conservation Client Gateway is available 24/7, enabling you to choose the time that works best for you!

For step-by-step instructions on getting started, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/clientgateway

Looking for News about NRCS in Oklahoma?

Our digital communication channels and platforms put you in touch with the right subscribers at the right time, delivering valuable information and updates on everything from weekly crop reports and legislations to plant pest alerts and export and trade news - keeping farming communities strong.

Subscribe free to Oklahoma NRCS GovDelivery:

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts.USDANRCS/subscriber/new>



NATIONAL HISPANIC ★ HERITAGE MONTH ★

September 15 - October 15



Each year, Americans observe National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15, by celebrating the histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America.

The observation started in 1968 as Hispanic Heritage Week under President Lyndon Johnson and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period starting on September 15 and ending on October 15. It was enacted into law on August 17, 1988, on the approval of Public Law 100-402. The day of September 15 is significant because it is the anniversary of independence for Latin American countries Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16 and September 18, respectively. Also, Columbus Day or Día de la Raza, which is October 12, falls within this 30 day period

This year's theme is **'Hispanic Americans: Energizing Our Nation's Diversity'**. Dr. Fred Soto from the U.S. Department of Energy in Washington, DC submitted the winning theme, stating, "Hispanic Americans infuse a dynamic and powerful energy to America's diversity. Their contribution to art, music, religion, and family continues to shape American societal values, language, music, and American culture. The resiliency of Hispanic culture is interwoven in our Nation's fabric through countless contributions in many professions and fields. We hope that the essence of this theme is celebrated not only during Hispanic Heritage Month, but throughout the years to come."

The National Council of Hispanic Employment Program Managers (NCHEPM) is an inter-agency and membership-based organization consisting of an executive board, members, associates and partners from multiple Federal agencies and other organizations from across the United States, advocating for the improvement of Hispanic participation in the Federal Government.

For more information about the Council, please email nationalcouncilhepm@gmail.com

NRCS Oklahoma's Hispanic Special Emphasis Program Manager is Lynnette Dominguez, Resource Engineer in our Pauls Valley Technical Service Center.

Lynnette.Dominguez@ok.usda.gov

NRCS Oklahoma participates at the 2015 Oklahoma Wildlife Expo -

submitted by Gilbert Guerrero, Assistant State Conservationist, Outreach

The 2015 Wildlife Expo was a huge success again and over 50,000 visitors came to the annual expo event in Guthrie. From camping and outdoor skills to shooting sports and fishing, from kayaking to learning about soil erosion and conservation, Expo visitors had an opportunity to get their hands on two days of fun in the outdoors. Home schooled children and students from local schools were able to spend time at the Oklahoma Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) booth while learning about conservation tillage. Those 3 days of hands on events allowed NRCS employees to promote and explain soil health and keeping our waters clean.



Clay Horton, District Conservationist from Ada, getting some help to show how erosion is taking place on a clean till system



Handing out pollinator seed packets to the next generation of conservationists



Former NRCS Oklahoma State Soil Scientist and current Oklahoma Conservation Commission employee, Greg Scott, demonstrating and explaining the rainfall simulator

Grady County Producers Forum -

submitted by Kim Walker, District Conservationist, Chickasha Field Service Center

This year's Producers Forum featured a Soil Health Workshop. This Soil Health Workshop focused on grasslands. Attendees participated in a Rainfall Simulator Demonstration put on by Clay Salisbury, Soil Scientist, Clinton Technical Office. Caleb Stone, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Agronomist, presented "Managing Pastureland & Rangeland to Promote Soil Health" power point presentation. Soil Fertility as a Foundation of Soil Health in Bermuda grass Pastures was presented by Professor Jason Warren, Soil & Water Conservation/Management Extension Specialist with Oklahoma State University (OSU). Alex Rocateli, Forage Systems Extension Specialist with OSU also showed a presentation on Forage Production and Soil Health in Grasslands. We also had a Solar Pump Demonstration by Willard Tillman with the Oklahoma Black Historical Research Project (OBHRP) in conjunction with the Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC) who also provided lunch. Booth space was also provided for local, state & federal USDA agencies. The workshop was a huge success and provided valuable information to local producers.



Grady County Producers Forum

Soil Health & Erosion Education Booth - *submitted by Kevin Spears, District Conservationist, Mangum Field Service Center*

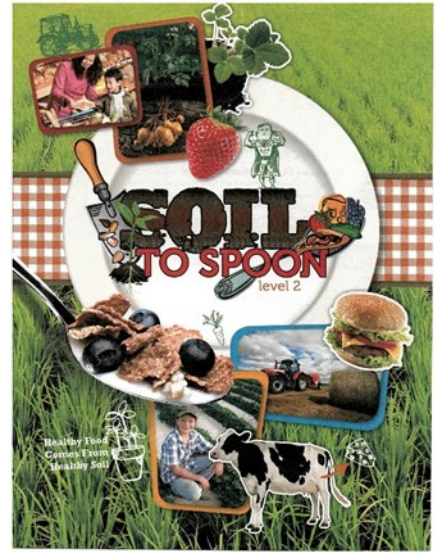
The NRCS staff, Mangum Field Service Center, partnered with the Greer County Conservation District in presenting an educational booth at the Greer County Fair held September 9-11. Adults and students were able to see a table-top representation of differing management practices on cropland and pasture as well as an erosion simulator that demonstrated how rivers and streams form and evolve.



2015 Kids Kows and More-

submitted by Michael Roberts, District Conservationist, Fairview Field Service Center

The Major County Conservation District and Fairview Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) assisted OSU Extension with an educational event for area 2nd and 3rd grade elementary students. The 2015 Kids Kows and More educational day was held in Major County on October 20, 2015. There were 274 participants of whom 240 were students in attendance from Ringwood, Aline-Cleo, Cimarron and Fairview Public Schools. Students learned about the importance of agriculture and how it effects all of us daily. The Major County 2015 edition of Kids Kows and More included sessions on Bees, Corn, Swine, Soil to Spoon and Dairy, with the mobile dairy always being a big hit for the kids! Michael Roberts and Cindy Bierig presented information on Soil Health using demonstrations as well as publications from the National Association of Conservation Districts Soil to Spoon and Dig It series. Each student and teacher was provided a Soil to Spoon activity book as well as a Soil to Spoon bookmark by the Major County Conservation District. This was an exciting day sharing our story of conservation and soil health to a great group of students eager to learn more about agriculture.



Natural Resource Education in Kay County-

submitted by Susan Henning, District Conservationist, Kay County Conservation District (KCCD)

Between April 15 and May 22, 1800 students either visited the outdoor classroom or programs were taken to the schools for varied natural resource learning experiences. Early elementary level standardized skills this year included learning about soil, so Wiggleworm the Earthworm puppet hit the road to visit schools with a puppet show followed by each student making a dirt baby to take home. Over 300 dirt babies were taken home to grow grass "hair." All Newkirk Elementary classes visited the outdoor classroom. They enjoyed picking and tasting their own strawberry, planting vegetables and butterfly plants in the classroom, and counting the fish in the pond. The school year came to a close with participation by 200 3rd Graders at the Natural Resource Day on May 14. Natural Resource Stations included: Soils with Jeremy Dennis, NRCS Soil Scientist; Fish Biology with Nathan Copeland and Ashley Nealis of the Oklahoma Dept. of Wildlife Conservation; Streambank Erosion featuring the OSU Stream Trailer with Wade Warren, Noble County Conservation District; Wildlife Skins and Skulls with Corbin DeWitt, OSU Extension; Dutch Oven Cooking with Curtis Grace and team from the Heartland of the Prairie Dutch Oven Cookers; Ag in the Classroom with, Cheri Long; Water Quality of Streams with Jeri Fleming, OK Blue Thumb; Powerline Safety with Mark McMacon, Kay Electric Cooperative, and Geology with Susan Henning, KCCD District Manager.



3rd Graders try their hand at milking Bessie the Cow at the Ag in the Classroom station hosted by Cheri Long. They also churned their own butter to eat with pretzel sticks!



Wade Warren, Noble County Conservation District, demonstrates erosion along streams with and without vegetation with the OSU Stream Trailer



Susan Henning, Kay County District Manager, shared her rock collection and explained about sedimentary, igneous, and metamorphic rocks at the Geology Station



Students look on as Jeremy Dennis, NRCS Soils Scientist, explain the characteristics of soil beneficial for plant growth

Lincoln County Land Judging-

submitted by Ed Stinchcomb, District Conservationist, Chandler Field Service Center

On April 8, 2015, the Lincoln County Conservation District sponsored and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Chandler Field Office, set up and conducted the District's annual land judging contest. Youth participants included 36 FFA students and 12 4-H members. The Oklahoma Assembly of God Youth Camp (located south of Chandler) graciously offered their facility and grounds for the contest as the contest promotes practical education to the youth of Lincoln County. On April 1, 2015, the Lincoln County Conservation District also sponsored a Land Judging School in conjunction with the contest which was presented by the OSU Extension Service and NRCS in Lincoln County.

Lincoln County Land Judging



Legislative Field Day-

submitted by Brenda Schultz, Garfield County Conservation District

Turkey Creek in Garfield County was the site of the Legislative Field Day. Garfield County Conservation District and the Enid Natural Resources Conservation Service helped sponsor the event. Oklahoma Conservation Commission shared information on soil health, and water quality measures being applied across the turkey creek site.



Watershed Training Tour-

submitted by State Office Engineering Department

On July 13, 2015, a group of 8 Oklahoma Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) employees, consisting of newly hired staff and summer interns, experienced a rare watershed tour in Dewey County. The training was rare in that the employees got to see a watershed rehabilitation in 3 different phases; planning, construction, and completion, all within a 25 mile stretch along Hwy 47.

The first stop on the tour was at Barnitz Creek Site 11, which is currently under construction for the rehabilitation of the site. The trainees were able to view different types of construction equipment, earthfill placement techniques, foundation drain components, and get an understanding of the various actions that take place during the rehabilitation of an existing watershed project.

The next stop on the tour was Barnitz Creek Site 5, which is the planning/design phase of the rehabilitation process. The instructors discussed the processes of working with landowners to gain easements and the impacts that would occur on their land during construction activities. After seeing the construction on Site 11, the employees were better able to visualize the construction processes, such as principal spillway pipe installation. It was mentioned to the trainees that being able to visualize these processes is very helpful when visiting with a landowner about a potential rehabilitation project. The last stop of the tour was at Barnitz Creek Site 1. The rehabilitation on this site started in 2013 and construction ended August 2014. At this site the instructors covered topics such as vegetation, erosion control measures, and completed structural components of the project, like the concrete principal spillway tower.

Overall, the trainees enjoyed the tour and were able to experience the three phases of watershed rehabilitation all in a single days' time. The instructors on this tour consisted of Paul Clark, Dewey County District Conservationist, Brian Dillard, Project Engineer, Larry Frey, Civil Engineer Technician, Jon Lillie, Construction Inspector, David McKay, Resource Engineer, and Dan Smith, Resource Engineer.



David McKay, NRCS Resource Engineer, providing instruction at Barnitz Creek Site 11

Gary O'Neill, State Conservationist and other attendees view pond build with State Cost Share funding



Oklahoma NRCS Employee Updates:

RETIREMENTS

Leota Burnett, Soil Conservation Technician, Miami Field Office, effective February 2015 after 25 yrs of Federal Service

Ron Goedecke, District Conservationist, Okmulgee Field Office, effective May 2015 after 32 yrs of Federal Service

John Mustain, State Forester, Stillwater State Office, effective September 2015 after 32 yrs of Federal Service

Tom Neumeyer, District Conservationist, Stigler Field Office, effective October 2015 after 41.5 yrs of Federal Service

Mark Conkling, Resource Specialist, Clinton Technical Service Office, effective October 2015 after 37.5 yrs of Federal Service

RESIGNATIONS

Mackenzie Gaines, Soil Conservationist, Enid Field Office, effective August 2015

Barrett Robinson, Soil Conservation Technician, Beaver Field Office, effective August 2015

Matthew Thielke, District Conservationist, Watonga Field Office, effective August 2015

Joshua Moore, Soil Conservation Technician, Clinton Field Office, effective September 2015

Scott Robertson, Soil Conservationist, Cordell Field Office, effective September 2015

Cari Manley, District Conservationist, Beaver Field Office, effective October 2015

TRANSFERS OUT

Malcolm Jones, Soil Conservationist, Wilburton Field Office, was selected for a position with NRCS Kansas effective August 2015

Ryan McCloud, Soil Conservationist, Newkirk field Office, was selected for a position with NRCS Alabama effective November 2015

TRANSFERS IN

Sean Mallory, NRCS Arkansas, was selected for the Agricultural Engineer position, McAlester Technical Service Office, effective August 2015

Daniel Meyer, NRCS Utah, was selected for the District Conservationist position, Pawnee Field Office, effective August 2015

Payton Mumford, NRCS Texas, was selected for the Soil Conservationist position, Duncan Field Office, effective August 2015

REASSIGNMENTS

Liana Wagner, Soil Conservationist (Pathways Intern), was converted to Soil Conservationist, Career-Conditional, Stillwater Field Office, effective May 2015

NEW HIRES

Jim Blakley, was selected for the Soil Conservation Technician, Durant Field Office, effective April 2015

Christopher Clemens, was selected for the Soil Conservation Technician, Cherokee Field Office, effective May 2015

David Hannon, was selected for the Soil Conservation Technician, Hugo Field Office, effective May 2015

Richard "Ryan" Rich, was selected for the Soil Conservation Technician, Stigler Field Office, effective May 2015

Hannah Spiller, was selected for the Agricultural Engineer position, Perry Technical Service Office, effective August 2015

James "Sam" Fox, was selected for the Soil Conservation Technician position, Wewoka Field Office, effective October 2015

Jonathan Mann, was selected for the Soil Conservationist position, Cordell Field Office, effective October 2015

Jason Stoll, was selected for the Soil Conservation Technician position, Clinton Field Office, effective October 2015

Anamari Holcomb, was selected for the Soil Conservation Technician position, Atoka Field Office, effective November 2015

Lisa Montgomery, was selected for the Programs Support Specialist position, Claremore Field Office, effective November 2015

TRANSFERS

Cassandra "Sam" Sites, Budget Office, Stillwater State Office, was selected for the Financial Resources Specialist position, Stillwater State Office, effective May 2015

Joshua Ketch, Soil Conservationist, Poteau Field Office, was selected for the Business Services Specialist position, Stillwater State Office, effective June 2015

Jeremy Hughes, Soil Conservationist, Medford Field Office, was selected for the Soil Conservationist position, Woodward Field Office, effective August 2015

Jared Newton, Soil Conservation Technician, Muskogee Field Office, was selected for the Civil Engineer Technician position, McAlester Technical Service Office, effective August 2015

Scott Pace, District Conservationist, Idabel Field Office, was selected for the District Conservationist position, Hugo Field Office, effective August 2015

Cambra Fields, District Conservationist, Boise City Field Office, was selected for the District Conservationist position, Vinita Field Office, effective September 2015

Dino Rodriguez, Soil Conservationist, Boise City Field Office, was selected for the District Conservationist position, Boise City Field Office, effective October 2015

Roderick Dukes, Soil Conservationist, Clinton Field Office, was selected for the District Conservationist position, Okmulgee Field Office, effective October 2015

Eric Shaw, Soil Conservationist, Idabel Field Office, was selected for the District Conservationist position, Idabel Field Office, effective September 2015

Reed Yule, Soil Conservationist, Pawhuska Field Office, was selected for the Soil Conservationist position, Anadarko Field Office, effective August 2015

OTHER

Lou Ann Walker, Group Manager, USDA OCIO Oklahoma Staff, retired, effective October 2015

New NRCS AFFILIATES

Sarah Foulks, Farm Bill Specialist, Stillwater State Office - Programs, effective August 2015

Auquette Anderson-Osobu, Farm Bill Specialist, Lawton Field Office, effective September 2015

Katie Williams, Farm Bill Specialist, Holdenville Field Office, effective October 2015

NRCS Pathways Interns

Brandy Green, Soil Conservationist (Pathways Intern), Stillwater State Office - Engineering, effective August 2015

Joshua Hall, Soil Conservationist (Pathways Intern), Stillwater State Office - Ecological Sciences, effective August 2015

Trenton Inselman, Soil Conservationist (Pathways Intern), Stillwater State Office - Water Resources, effective August 2015

ACTINGS

Michael Bryan, District Conservationist, Wilburton Field Office, is the acting District Conservationist, Stigler Field Office until further notice

Brandon Burns, District Conservationist, Kingfisher Field Office, is the acting District Conservationist, Watonga Field Office until further notice

PJ Martin, Soil Conservationist, Beaver Field Office, is the acting District Conservationist, Beaver Field Office until further notice

Clay Salisbury, Soil Scientist, Clinton Technical Service Office, is the acting Resource Specialist, Clinton Technical Service Office until further notice

Brent Reavis, Resource Specialist, McAlester Technical Service Office, is the acting Asst State Conservationist, Zone 4, until further notice

USDA & Tribes of Oklahoma hold 4th Annual Tribal Consultation-

submitted by Carol Crouch, State Tribal Liaison

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the 39 Tribes of Oklahoma today conducted the 4th annual Tribal Consultation session between the groups. This government-to-government meeting of the sovereign nations within Oklahoma and the top state-level executives of USDA's agencies allowed the groups to exchange information, collaborate and identify ways USDA can better serve tribal governments and tribal members. The Oklahoma Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (OTCAC) partnered with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to sponsor the Tribal Consultation meeting with the Chickasaw Nation as the host. The meeting was held on August 25, in Sulphur, Oklahoma. During the consultation, leaders from nearly 30 of Oklahoma's 39 Tribes met with leaders from nine USDA Agencies, the Department of Interior, two state agencies, and several universities.

Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby welcomed the attendees. He also described some of the ways USDA has collaborated with the Chickasaw Nation to support the tribe's significant growth throughout the years. "The Chickasaw Nation's partnership with USDA goes back decades, and continues to grow today," said Anoatubby. U.S. Congressman Tom Cole, a Chickasaw, also participated in the Tribal Consultation. Gary O'Neill, NRCS State Conservationist, introduced Tribal leaders and high ranking officials from USDA. Robert Bible, President of the College of the Muscogee Nation, highlighted how the college partnered with USDA to expand their library, purchase kitchen equipment and fitness equipment, and develop a Muscogee Cultural Garden as one such success. Justin Reed, agriculture teacher at Mill Creek High School, shared his story of how he got his start by utilizing loans through the Farm Service Agency (FSA) to start a cattle operation. He said he uses his personal story to teach Mill Creek students the importance of financial literacy and to seek opportunities such as the ones he found through USDA. Lahoma Simmons, Director of the Muskogee Loan Fund, also shared a very personal story. She described how USDA's Self-Help Housing program completely changed her life's trajectory by pulling her out of low-income housing and helping her achieve homeownership. Jack Hicks, Choctaw Nation Agricultural Director, shared how the Choctaw Nation has utilized NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) to implement conservation practices to improve and preserve over 44,000 acres of Choctaw Nation agriculture and forest lands. Chief Glenna Wallace, Eastern Shawnee Tribe, shared how her Tribe has utilized the NRCS EQIP to receive funding for a seasonal high tunnel to assist the Tribe in starting a tribal community garden and grow cultural significant plants. According to Dr. Carol Crouch, "USDA agencies and Oklahoma's tribal governments have partnered to create some remarkable successes this past year and having them share their USDA success stories provided an opportunity for other Tribes to realize the resources that USDA agencies have available to Oklahoma Tribes and their tribal members."



Governor Bill Anoatubby & USDA Leaders



Congressman Cole



Justin Reed



Chief Wallace



136 attended the Tribal Consultation meeting

Bartlesville Public Library Display- ***submitted by James Dixon, Dewey County District Conservationist***

During the month of May 2015, The Caney Valley Conservation District, Nowata County Conservation District and the Dewey Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office displayed a conservation exhibit at the Bartlesville Public Library. This year's exhibit focused on soil health. A time line of the history of conservation in Oklahoma was also part of the theme. The library staff reported that approximately 18,000 visitors came through the front doors where the exhibit could be viewed.



Dewey Co 21st Annual Natural Resource Day- ***submitted by James Dixon, Dewey County District Conservationist***

The Caney Valley Conservation District in cooperation with the Dewey NRCS Field Office conducted the 21st Annual Natural Resource Days on May 6th and 7th. This event was for all 4th grade students in Washington County and 550 were in attendance. Students learned about wildlife, recycling, soil conservation/health, forestry, and water conservation. Special thanks goes out to other agencies that provided educational, including: Army Corps of Engineers, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture – Wildlife Services and Forestry Department, Oklahoma Conservation Commission-Blue Thumb Program, Washington County OSU Extension Service, and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. Thirteen Earth team Volunteers were also utilized as group guides and for meal preparation to feed the presenters.



James Dixon, Dewey Co District Conservationist, utilized a rainfall simulator to explain the importance of crop residue and cover crops in reducing soil erosion and improving water quality

Noble County - Perry Field Service Center-
submitted by Melissa Thompson, Noble County Soil Conservationist



On June 19, 2015, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Perry Field Service Center worked with the Otoe-Missouria tribe to put on a Intertribal Youth Expo it took place at Red Rock, OK. A variety of presenters were available. The NRCS office presented Native grass and trees of Oklahoma. Rusty Peterson District Conservationist, Melissa Thompson Soil Conservationist, and Annette Sparks Student Intern had help from Chad Webb with OSU extension. There were 112 kids that we presented information to.

July 10, 2015 the (NRCS) Perry Field Service worked with the Otoe-Missouria tribe to present Skin and Skull to 45 kids. Melissa Thompson Soil Conservationist, Dennis Brorsen Soil Conservation Technician, and Annette Sparks, summer student intern.



September 1, 2015 the Perry Field Office had a Soil Health Workshop out in the field. We had a soil health demonstration, talked through soil health cards, also discussed the concerns for conservation work needed on the land. This meeting served as a Local Program Development and Local Led for Noble County Conservation District and Natural Resource Conservation Service. There were 11 people in attendance. This was a cooperative effort with NRCS, Noble County Conservation District, OSU Extension.



Payne County Cattle Producers Association -
submitted by Liana Jones, Payne County Soil Conservationist

The Payne County Cattle Producers Association banquet was held at the Payne County Expo Center on Oct. 22, 2015. The annual event is conducted to recognize the counties cattlemen, their herds and accomplishments. Michael Kelsey, Executive Vice-President for the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association, delivered an update to the members. Scholarships and awards were also presented and a hall of fame members, James and Debbie Harrison, were inducted.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Stillwater field office was able to participate as a vendor and had a booth to showcase climate hubs. The display, along with program and conservation material, attracted many participants. The booth focused on the Southern Plains Hub and the grazingland research being conducted in El Reno. According to the USDA, livestock in a changing climate can be affected in a variety of ways ranging from quality of pastures, reproduction, growth and even disease. There were many other vendors present which include Farm Credit of East Central Oklahoma, Payne County Bank, Stillwater Milling Company, and Livingston equipment, to name a few. There were approximately 182 members present for the banquet.

"We really enjoy these type events where we can promote conservation and interact with our county producers," Matthew Elliot, Payne County District Conservationist said.



Payne County soil conservationist, Liana Jones, along with district conservationist, Matthew Elliott alongside the climate hub booth at the Payne County Cattle Producers Association banquet



Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival-

submitted by Donna Neumeyer, Leflore County District Conservationist

The Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival invites all visitors to enjoy tribal heritage activities, an intertribal powwow, Choctaw cultural exhibitions, stickball games, arts and crafts, free concerts and informational booths. The 2015 annual festival was held on their traditional grounds, in Tuskahoma, Oklahoma hosting over 90,000 visitors. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) partnered with the Choctaw Nation to have two USDA informational booths and NRCS conducted soil health demonstrations during the festival. USDA agencies partners with NRCS; NRCS, Farm Service Agency (FSA), Rural Development (RD), Risk Management Agency (RMA) and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

Festival attendees received valuable information regarding: the importance of soil health; best management practices for pasture and rangeland, USDA Farm Bill 2014 updates and information on the USDA StrikeForce Initiative; which includes all the counties within the Choctaw Nation tribal boundaries. USDA employees that assisted with the USDA booths were: Dr. Carol Crouch, Dereck Kelso, Tom Neumeyer, Donna Neumeyer, Jimmy Ward, Linda Tims, Eric Shaw, Tom James, Ryan Rich, Linda Boatright, Jo Anna Morgan and LeahAnn Lankford.



USDA employees from NRCS, RD and FSA assisted at the USDA informational



Youth, tribal members and Elders visit the USDA booths



Soil Health Demonstration

Environmental Education Day - *submitted by Cambra Fields, Craig County District Conservationist*

Craig County Conservation District employees and board members held their Annual Environmental Education Day on September 29, 2015. The educational day was for 5th grade children within Craig County. There were approximately 250 kids that were in attendance. The local NRCS office, along with Julie Lamb, Steve Clark (Plant Booth), Jake Boyett (Soil Booth) and Merica Xiong (Water Quality Booth) assisted the District. The booths that were present were Oklahoma Department of Wildlife, Department of Forestry, DEQ, Oklahoma Conversation Commission, "Grown for you" Noble Foundation/Oklahoma Farm Bureau and Bernice Nature Center.



Craig County Environmental Education Day

2015 Feds Feed Families-

The 2015 Feds Feed Families campaign began July 15, 2015 and ran through October 2, 2015. Launched in 2009 as part of President Obama's *United we Serve* campaign, Feds Feed Families was designed to help food banks and pantries stay stocked during summer months when they traditionally see a decrease in donations and an increase in need.

This year Oklahoma USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Rural Development (RD) chose The Wings of Hope to receive our donations. Wings of Hope Family Crisis Services, located in Stillwater, provides services to individuals and families experiencing domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking and child abuse or neglect.

As part of the fundraiser, the USDA club, Stillwater State Office, hosted a Rainfall Simulator Cookout. Steve Alspach, State Soil Scientist, and Jeremy Dennis, Soil Scientist, generously donated their time and expertise and conducted a rainfall simulator demonstration for the State Office USDA employees while the USDA club hosted a hamburger cookout. Employees were asked to bring monetary donations or nonperishable foods for donation to the Feds Feed Families campaign.

The Wings of Hope received a total of 230lbs of food from the NRCS, FSA and RD at the conclusion of the Feds Feed Families campaign.



**Stillwater State Office
Feds Feed Families
Campaign**

